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Seventy-second year

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Thursday, 2 February 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Yelchenko	(Ukraine)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/73)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016) (S/2017/75)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first public meeting of the Security Council for the month of February, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Council for the month of January. I am sure I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Skoog and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/73)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016) (S/2017/75)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/73, which contains the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), as well as to document S/2017/75, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: At the oustet, allow me to congratulate the new members of the Security Council on assuming their responsibilities, as well as to thank those that left the Council at the end of last year for their continuous strong support and cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Let me start my briefing by applauding the bravery of the Iraqi security forces, including the popular mobilization forces, the Peshmerga and tribal volunteers, as well as the endurance of the Iraqi people.

Three months after the Mosul liberation operation began, combat operations in the eastern part of Mosul have come to an end. The steady progress should not serve to conceal the fact that fighting has been — and will continue to be — a massive challenge, in particular inside the old city, in western Mosul. With significant support from international partners, especially the United States, Iraqi forces will remain engaged in complex urban operations. Yet the liberation operations in Iraq are coming to an end in the near foreseeable future. The days of the so-called caliphate of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are numbered. I take this opportunity to honour the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the fight against the ISIL international terrorists for the sake of a free and united Iraq and in defence of human values shared by the world, as strong allies of the United States and a steadfast part of the international anti-ISIL coalition.

In the post-Da'esh period Iraq will need continuous substantial and substantive support and assistance from the international community, including its regional partners. Any abrupt scaling down of engagement or support would mean repeating mistakes of the past — mistakes that have had grave consequences for stability and security well beyond the borders of Iraq.

The humanitarian concept of operations adopted by the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi security forces, including the popular mobilization forces, prioritizes the protection of civilians in an unprecedented manner, in both the planning and the conduct of military operations, based on the lessons learned from mistakes of the previous liberation operations. The conduct of all security forces during the liberation operations has mitigated much, but not all, of the fear that existed among the population of Mosul prior to the operation. I note that UNAMI has received no evidence of any systematic or widespread violations of international humanitarian law or human rights law on the part of the security forces. Regrettably, however, criminal acts against civilians and prisoners of war still occur. There are most often quickly investigated, with measures taken to prevent such acts in the future. I furthermore

note that security screenings of civilians leaving areas controlled by Da'esh appear to be conducted in a transparent manner and in general observance of international standards. However, I express my concerns about disturbing reports of looting and destruction of civilian property and looting of humanitarian aid by armed groups operating in support of the Iraqi security forces, in particular by some local resistance groups.

Protecting civilians, avoiding steps that could incite sectarian tensions and preventing looting and revenge attacks in Mosul, but also in other liberated areas of the country, are of vital importance for winning the hearts and minds of the population. They constitute the first steps in the process of national and community-based reconciliation and in building a truly unified and united Iraq in which all its people will feel like equal citizens, be treated fairly and be protected by the State. I am pleased to note here that, during its meeting on 30 January, the Council of Representatives supported the Prime Minister's proposed candidates for the positions of Minister of Defence and Minister of the Interior. Swift action to agree on the selection and appointment of ministers for the remaining vacant posts, including the Ministers of Trade, Industry and Finance, is necessary.

The world will not forget the horrendous crimes committed by Da'esh. Provisional justice for the victims of human rights abuses and violations requires the re-establishment of the formal justice system, the effective and efficient documentation of violations and abuses and the establishment of non-formal justice mechanisms, such as truth-telling, specialized care and rehabilitation programmes for women and deradicalization programmes for children subjected to extremist indoctrination. There is also a need for broader intra- and inter-community dialogue on justice and human rights.

Attention should also be given to the needs of ethnic and religious minorities, which have been disproportionately affected by the conflict. Since 2003, Iraq has lost more than half of its ethnic and religious minority population. It is my fear that, without an adequate response, that process will continue even after the defeat of Da'esh. Special attention should therefore be paid to arrangements that address the specific security and other concerns of minorities in order to enable them to return to their homes.

Over the past months, I have engaged with the leadership of the Iraqi National Alliance, the largest parliamentary block, on the way forward in post-Da'esh Iraq. The National Alliance submitted its national settlement initiative to UNAMI on 30 October 2016. I welcome and support that encouraging move. The National Alliance initiative is a good starting point in the Iraqi-owned and -led, but United Nations-facilitated, process of national settlement and reconciliation and has already sparked a wave of interest in all sectors of Iraqi society. UNAMI is currently working with those groups, including the Sunni and Turkmen components, the Kurdistan region of Iraq, civil society, minority communities, tribal leaders and youth and women's groups, with the aim of soliciting their views and vision on how to build a post-ISIL united Iraq based on the principles of equality and citizenship. Let me emphasize that, for national reconciliation to succeed, it must be supported by grassroots initiatives. I am therefore glad to announce that UNAMI has launched a series of events under the theme "Iraq: Youth and Coexistence". The first such event took place on 28 January in Basra, where 120 youth from the four southern governorates participated.

After months of uncertainty regarding the timing of the Provincial Council elections in Iraq, Prime Minister Al Abadi announced on 17 January that governorate and district council elections were scheduled to be held on 16 September. It is now up to the Council of Representatives to urgently put in place the appropriate legal and institutional framework for those elections to take place. A clear and comprehensive electoral legal framework is essential to enable preparations by the Independent High Electoral Commission. I also encourage the Government of Iraq to provide the requisite funding for the Commission in order to facilitate its regulatory and operational planning and preparations for the elections. In addition, on 23 January, the Kurdistan Regional Government announced that the parliamentary and presidential elections would be conducted on 11 November.

During the previous phase of the Mosul operation, an estimated 825,000 civilians remained in their homes in the areas retaken by the Iraqi security forces. Nearly 190,000 people have been displaced since mid-October, far fewer than humanitarians had feared. Thirty thousand of those people have already returned to their homes and more are doing so every day. Although the military campaign to oust ISIL from Iraq is nearly

won, the humanitarian crisis is expected to continue for months, if not years. In December 2016, humanitarian partners presented an advanced summary of the 2017 humanitarian response plan. At least $985 million is required this year to reach the 5.8 million most vulnerable Iraqis. Of that total $331 million is being sought specifically for the Mosul response.

A great deal is already being done. More than 1.4 million displaced Iraqis have returned to their homes, including 1 million in the past 12 months throughout the country. The United Nations Development Programme Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization is currently operational in 21 liberated towns and districts. Hundreds of thousands of people have returned to the cities and districts facilitated by that activity.

Allow me now to turn the issue of missing Kuwaiti nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. The Government of Iraq has shown determination to pursue the important work of locating missing persons. Through the proactive efforts of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, the number of witnesses coming forward to give information has increased dramatically. Field visits and excavation work continue, both in Iraq and in Kuwait.

Separately, efforts in recovering Kuwait's missing patrimony are ongoing. Over 6,000 Kuwaiti books have been located and itemized from the libraries of the Kufa and Babil Universities, and are being prepared for an official handover to Kuwait. Yet time is not on our side. As time passes, it makes locating burial sites all the more difficult. We owe it to the families of the deceased to continue supporting Iraq in this humanitarian process and to continue employing a multidimensional and innovative approach, which Iraq requires to honour and fulfil its international obligations in this area.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

The representative of Uruguay has asked for the floor to make a statement.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the delegation of Ukraine on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Sweden and his entire team for their outstanding management of the work of the Council in January — Ambassador Skoog and his staff have indeed set the bar very high. I also wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing.

It is clear that Iraq still faces several major humanitarian, political, economic and security challenges, but the main one, without a doubt, is the fight against terrorism. Uruguay recognizes the arduous work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which, in close coordination with the Iraqi Government, have been carrying out very important and effective work to address the various crises affecting the country.

We reiterate that combating the terrorist scourge should take place in the framework of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and must be coordinated within the United Nations. We also support the efforts made by the Iraqi Government, with the support of the global coalition to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, in the fight against the grave threat posed by the Islamic State to Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and its civilian population.

We need to underscore the fact that Iraqi authorities have placed the highest priority on the protection of civilians and on achieving an immediate response to the humanitarian emergency in the context of their military offensive in Mosul. We are obviously concerned about the situation of civilians who are trapped in Mosul, in particular the most vulnerable groups, and the fact that Da'esh is using civilians as human shields, which is one more example of their utter cowardice.

We urge the parties to the conflict to respect and protect civilians, in particular women, children, disabled persons and older persons, and to respect human rights and allow access to emergency assistance, in accordance with international humanitarian law. It is of particular concern that there are now more than 160,000 persons who have been displaced as a result of the fighting, and there could soon be even more.

Repairing civilian infrastructure, the normal provision of services and the gradual return of the internally displaced to their homes must be priorities following the liberation of Mosul. It continues to be clear that military operations alone will not eliminate the threat of terrorism in Iraq. Iraqi political leaders must overcome their divisions and mistrust and reach an agreement on a single vision for national reconciliation. Without such a vision it will be very difficult in the

future to heal the wounds that continue to drain the life out of the Iraqi people.

The President: The representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia has asked for the floor to make a statement.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by wishing you, Sir, and your team every success in presiding over the work of the Security Council during the month of February. I would also like to echo your comments, Sir, and of those who spoke before me, in congratulating the Swedish presidency on its work during the month of January.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia recognizes and encourages the brave and determined work being carried out by the Iraqi people and Government in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and terrorism and underscores that the provision of humanitarian assistance that the Iraqi Government has ensured in all its military tasks is in accordance with international humanitarian law. At the same time, Bolivia reiterates its vigorous condemnation of the terrorism and violence that have been wrought upon women and children in Mosul. Similarly, the Plurinational State of Bolivia recognizes the efforts and will of the Iraqi people to reach a historic political and social agreement by consensus and with mutual respect among all parties involved that establishes and strengthens peace, in accordance with respect for the principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We add our voice to the calls for support for the rebuilding of hospitals, schools and State universities destroyed during the conflict, as well as for the requests for support to carry out electoral processes in various regional Governments, in particular with regard to the biometric voter registry. We believe that the international community must recognize the efforts carried out by the Iraqi Government and, in particular the Iraqi people, in the common struggle against terrorism.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Republic of Ukraine on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your efforts to ensure transparency. I would also like to congratulate the Kingdom of Sweden on its presidency of the Council in January. We are pleased to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). We appreciate his efforts, both in Baghdad and in New York, and those of his team.

We would also like to welcome Mrs. Nikki Haley, who is assuming her position on the Security Council. We wish her every success. We are keen to work on issues of common interest.

The Government of Iraq highly commends the sacrifices made by Iraqi forces under the joint supervision of the international alliance. We welcome the successful liberation of Mosul. The western part of that city has been fully liberated, and that includes 87 neighbourhoods. Iraqi forces are completing the preparations for taking over the eastern part of the city. Mr. Al Abadi, who is President of the Governing Council of Ministers, has signed a memorandum to launch reconstruction projects in the various liberated neighbourhoods and to undertake demining. That will open the way for the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and for the provision of services to the Iraqi people so that life can resume as normal.

More than 2,000 Iraqi families have been able to return to their homes in the western part of the city, which has been freed from Da'esh criminals. Their return is continuing following the removal of explosives and mines. We also thank the local population for their active participation in the cleanup of the streets in the liberated neighbourhoods.

The President of the Council of Ministers and Head of the Armed Forces has issued urgent decrees, which are to be implemented immediately. Those decrees go to the relevant authorities to ensure security and the provision of emergency aid and shelter to those displaced from Mosul. This is based on the Ninawa liberation humanitarian plan, which was a joint operation for the liberation of Ninawa. They have informed the ministry responsible for IDPs and immigration on the expected number of IDPs before beginning the liberation of the eastern side of Mosul so that the necessary steps can be taken with regard to providing shelter and emergency assistance.

The Ministry of Trade has quickly provided food in the liberated areas, in cooperation with the local

Governments of Ninawa. I am pleased to inform the Security Council that the Council of Representatives of Iraq intends to approve the candidates for the positions of the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Interior. This will allow the success achieved on the ground to be consolidated.

The Government of Iraq welcomes the joint communiqué adopted following the visit to Iraq of the Head of the Turkish Government, Mr. Binali Yıldırım, particularly as concerns the Bashiqa camp in Iraq. The communiqué also refers to the need for respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and we look forward to its implementation as soon as possible with a view to strengthening bilateral relations in various areas, including the combat against terrorism, so as to ensure security and stability along the border between the two countries.

My Government calls upon all countries worldwide to implement resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), in particular with respect to putting an end to the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The Security Council sanctions Committees must shoulder their responsibilities fully under their prerogatives in order to neutralize these terrorist groups and dry up their sources of funding. By this I mean follow-up with respect to those States that provide financial support and arms to terrorist groups, including Da'esh, thereby enabling them to engage in the trafficking of Iraqi oil and Iraqi archaeological treasures.

Iraq welcomes the actions of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, which have provided Iraq with the means to combat terrorism, including during the coordination meeting held in Baghdad in the presence of UNAMI. In order to coordinate international efforts aimed at providing technical support to Iraq in the combat against terrorism, we urge donors and international organizations to provide the relevant technical support. We welcome UNAMI's efforts in this regard, particularly its work to promote national reconciliation and enhance the role played by young people, as reflected in the youth conference held in Basra, to which Mr. Ján Kubiš referred in his briefing.

The Government and the people of Iraq would like to thank all of the States of the international coalition, in particular the United States of America and the States of the European Union, as well as other States that are not part of the coalition, for the efforts undertaken to combat terrorism, particularly the provision of military and logistical support to Iraqi security forces, within the context of strict respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and in cooperation with the security forces.

We welcome the election and inauguration of Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States. However, we deeply regret the executive order of 27 January last, which includes restrictions on citizens of seven countries travelling to the United States, including Iraqis. This order is affecting a friendly, allied State that is linked with the United States by a strategic partnership. Given that it comes at a time when our brave fighters have achieved major progress in combating Da'esh in Mosul, we call on the United States Government to rethink its position. In this regard, we reiterate our resolve to enhance the strategic partnership between our two countries and to broaden the possibilities for cooperation, particularly in the combat against terrorism.

Iraq thanks and attaches great importance to the efforts of those friendly countries that have worked to restore stability and ensure reconstruction in those areas retaken from terrorist groups linked to Da'esh, with a view to alleviating the humanitarian crisis affecting displaced persons. This requires demining and the provision of basic services and employment to the local population. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in supporting displaced persons, and we call upon all States to provide funding in that respect.

For our part, we are doing everything in our power to enhance our relations with neighbouring Arab states, particularly Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey; we have a close relationship also with the Syrian Government. In the context of enhancing our brotherly ties to Kuwait, the high-level joint ministerial commission met in Baghdad on 28 December 2016, under the joint chairmanship of Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, and Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait. At that meeting, a number of issues of common interest were discussed, and in this regard the Iraqi Government reaffirms its commitment to sparing no effort to achieve progress on the issue of disappeared Kuwaiti citizens and Kuwaiti archives.

The joint commission as well as the national commissions are interviewing witnesses to determine the fate of disappeared persons, not only Kuwaiti citizens but also nationals of other countries. The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have stepped up their efforts to disseminate information on this issue via television, satellite stations and Government publications in order to obtain testimony and reliable information, with a view to carrying out visits on the ground and achieve concrete results. A number of technical meetings have been held, and excavations have taken place in a number of regions; 158 trenches were dug in Karbala recently, in the presence of witnesses, but no human remains were found. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence is providing the funding necessary for 2017 so as to ensure that excavations can continue in many areas, including Khamisiyah, Radwaniyah, Ayn_al-Tamr, Sulaymaniyah and Salman Pak.

The Iraqi Government attaches great importance to the sincere relations that link us to the brotherly Kuwaiti State. We greatly appreciate the tireless support from that brotherly country, in particular the provision of ready-made schools in liberated areas, which allows students to return to classes until their permanent schools have been rebuilt.

We welcome the efforts and the good offices of Russia, Iran and Turkey to reach a comprehensive Syrian settlement that can be accepted by all Syrian parties. We thank them for the efforts they are undertaking to eradicate terrorist groups in Syria, to put an end to regional and international support for those groups and to put an end to the recruitment of more terrorists. We also thank them for their efforts to ensure respect for the sovereignty of Syria, and to assist that country in such a way that it can be freed from the scourge of terrorism, destruction, death and displacement, thereby ensuring that stability and security can finally return to the region.

We would like to thank Kazakhstan for the efforts that country is making to ensure that the dialogue is successful. We also wish to thank its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, for his efforts to ensure the principles of peace and to reconcile the various points of views of the Syrian people under the auspices of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we extend our sincere thanks to Special Representative Kubiš for the efforts that he has continuously made on behalf of Iraq. We also wish to thank his team for its valuable advice to the Iraqi Government. Finally, we thank UNAMI for the efforts it has undertaken to ensure that Iraq is unified, stable and free of terrorists.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.